

TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND
SERVING SOMERSET, WICOMICO AND WORCESTER COUNTIES

Tri-County Council Meeting Minutes
September 22, 2011

Louise Gulyas, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to order on Thursday, September 22, 2011, at the Fountains Restaurant in Salisbury at 6:10 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Jerry Boston, Charles Fisher and Craig Mathies, Somerset County Commissioners; Bob Culver and Sheree Sample-Hughes, Wicomico County Council; Jim Bunting and Virgil Shockley, Worcester County Commissioners; Senator Jim Mathias; Delegate Norman Conway; Dennis Williams, Town of Princess Anne Commissioner; Bob Hawkins, Pocomoke City Council.

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Cindy Ward, Somerset County; Gerald Mason, Worcester County.

A quorum was present.

Staff in attendance: Mike Pennington, Kristie Eberly, John Donegan and Riggin Johnson.

Guests in attendance: Scott Warner, Mid-Shore Regional Council.

On a motion from Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Shockley, the minutes for the meeting of June 16, 2011, were approved as written.

Old Business

Tri-County Multi-Purpose Center Update

Mr. Donegan reported that the renovation will be complete in about three months. On the 1st floor the drywall is completed and they have started putting up the ceiling grid. On the 2nd floor the drywall has been completed, most of the ceiling grid is in and painting has begun. Currently there are three open RFPs for low voltage wiring, phone system and camera system. The low bidder for the parking lot construction was Joseph M. Zimmer and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) have agreed with the selection. The parking lot should be in before the One Stop Job Market (OSJM) moves in but the second coat, striping and landscaping will not be done until spring. The executive and administrative offices in Snow Hill are scheduled to move January 7 and the OSJM is scheduled to move about January 19.

Phase 2, which is the Shore Transit occupied areas of the building, should be complete in February. Only Shore Transit's administrative offices will be moving at that time. The rest of

Mr. Donegan noted that construction costs are running about 3% over budget.

Mr. Donegan asked that the Tri-County Council consider forming a committee to organize the grand opening event.

Shore Transit Update

Mr. Johnson reported that due to a decrease in Shore Transit's FY12 funding request by the Wicomico County Council of \$100,000, service has been reduced in the Salisbury area. There was a good turnout for the required Public Hearing and the proposed changes were well received. The route consolidation changes became effective August 15. A retirement community on the route that would have lost a stop, has given Shore Transit \$4,000 to keep the stop at the current location.

Mr. Johnson reported that the ridership for FY11 was up by 4%. Also there was about \$70,000 more in revenue than anticipated. For FY12 Shore Transit has an operating budget of \$4.3 million. The FY12 capital grant from MTA has not yet been approved.

Mr. Johnson noted that Shore Transit's first break in occurred recently at the Adkins Building. A suspect has been apprehended.

FY12 Budget Approval

Mr. Pennington, reporting for Mrs. Kerchner, stated that the FY12 budget was included in the meeting packet. The Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) issued a grant for \$100,000 for FY12 but then cut it to \$73,500. This funding is to be restored to the original amount. The Department of Human Resources (DHR) grant through Somerset County for Shore Transit is still pending. As there were no questions, on a motion from Mr. Shockley, seconded by Mr. Bunting, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to accept the FY12 budget as presented.

Regional Visioning Forum

Mr. Pennington reported that about 50 people attended the first meeting on September 19. The group set up six committees to look at a specific sectors and issues. Each meeting will focus on the findings of one committee. A draft of the meeting results should be available in December and the results will be presented at the Salisbury Chamber Annual Meeting in January.

Public Access Channel Presentation

Mrs. Sample-Hughes discussed the findings of the Public Access Channel Committee as a follow up to the presentation by PAC14 at the June 16 meeting. The committee spoke with a cable TV franchise consultant to learn about the franchise process, agreements and fees, PEG

agreements are between government entities and the cable providers. The agreements are usually for 15 years and renegotiation of agreements begins about three years prior to the agreement's expiration. An audit of the franchise fees can be a part of the renegotiation. An audit is paid for through uncollected funds recovered from the cable providers. A PAC is a great tool to educate the public; it's not just for government meetings.

The committee suggested that the Tri-County Council consider two options, a tri-county audit of cable providers and a PAC for Somerset and Worcester counties and their municipalities. Following discussion, the Tri-County Council decided that they were not interested in pursuing this matter any further at the current time.

New Business

Visit to Dover Air Force Base

Mr. Pennington noted that the visit to Dover Air Force Base is scheduled for Friday, October 14. We are limited to a group of 40 people and we are partnering with the Mid-Shore Regional Council for the trip.

Other Business

Mr. Pennington noted that some appointments have been made to the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and he thanked the counties for their assistance.

Mr. Pennington reported that the Sustainable Communities Grant that University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) and the Tri-County Council were working on has been put on hold.

Mr. Pennington noted that the Family Fun Day and Bus Road-eo was attended by about 90 people. Mark Pusey was the winner of the Bus Road-eo.

Mr. Pennington reported that the planning has begun for the 2012 "Taste of the Eastern Shore" Legislative Event. The first planning meeting with the Eastern Shore Chambers and the Mid-Shore Regional Council will be held in a few days.

Mr. Warner distributed information on the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund. He asked the members to review the information and support the initiative to fund the program in the FY2013 state budget.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Fisher, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.